This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 – 21 (canceled)

22. (Currently amended) A lifting device comprising:

a central column generally vertical when the lifting device is in an operating position, said column including two rear channels and two forwardly open channels extending the length of said column, each of said forwardly open channels having a rear wall and each of said rear channels having a front and rear wall and a passageway in said front wall open to the front of said column;

a carriage positioned to the front of said column and normally generally horizontal when the lifting device is in an operating position,

a pair of spaced forks at one end of said carriage, each having ~~an~~ one end connected to said carriage and the other end operatively connected to said column;

at least one rear bearing adjacent the other end of each of said forks, said rear bearing of one of said forks riding in one of said rear channels between said front and rear walls with its associated fork extending through the associated passageway and the said rear bearing of the other of said forks riding in the other of said rear channels between said front and rear walls with its associated fork extending through the associated passageway; and

a fork bearing on each fork positioned downwardly and forwardly from the rear bearing, said fork bearing of one of said forks riding in one of said forwardly open channels against said rear wall and the fork bearing of the other of said forks riding in the other of said forwardly open channels against said rear wall whereby said carriage is moveable along said column.

23. (Previously presented) The lifting device of calm 22 further including a slide having two ears, said column having two flanges, said ears engaging said flanges to support said slide for movement along said column, and a lead screw in engagement with said slide to move said slide along said column upon rotation of said lead screw, said slide being operatively connected to said forks to move said forks along said column as said lead screw is rotated.

24. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 22 wherein said device can be folded with said column and said carriage generally parallel, so that said device can be transported or stored.

25. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 24 wherein said device includes a brake mechanism that can be activated when said device is folded.

26. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 23 wherein said lead screw is disposed within said column.

27. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 26 wherein said lead screw is rotated by an electric motor, said electric motor receiving power from a source internal to said device.

28. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 22 wherein a chassis attached to a lower end of said column underlies said carriage and rests on a surface upon which said device is disposed.

29. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 28 wherein said device has first wheels disposed at a lower end of said column and pads and/or second wheels disposed at a distal end of said chassis.

30. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 24 further comprising a handle attached to said column to aid in carrying said device when said device is in its folded position.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 22 wherein said carriage can be selectively manually lengthened or shortened.

34. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 22 further comprising an upper ball foot disposed at an upper end of said column that engages a surface on which said device is placed when said column is horizontal.

35. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 22 further comprising arms extending generally horizontally from said column to stabilize said load.

36. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 35 further comprising at least one strap extending from at least one of said arms to stabilize said load.

37. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 22 further comprising a crane structure extending from said column.

38. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 29 wherein at least one of said first wheels is driven by a motor.

39. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 29 wherein each of said second wheels comprises:

(a) a vertical circular wheel disposed on a horizontal shaft;

(b) said horizontal shaft operatively connected to a horizontal plate disposed above said horizontal shaft; and

(c) said horizontal plate engaging generally horizontal ball bearings disposed between a plate fixedly connected to said carriage and said horizontal plate, said plate being disposed beneath said horizontal plate.

40. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 29 wherein each of said second wheels comprises at least two configurations manually selectable by rotation of said second wheels.

41. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 29 wherein each of said first wheels has a relatively soft circular movable covering placed thereabout to assist said first wheels in maneuvering across soft terrain.

42. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 41 wherein said relatively soft circular movable covering is filled with a foam material.

43. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 22 wherein said carriage is configured to hold thereon a toolbox, a chest of drawers, a seat of a vehicle, a circular container, or an object in a vise disposed at an edge of said carriage.

44. (Previously presented) The lifting device of claim 23 further including a rod extending between the spaced forks, said slide having a forwardly opening channel therein, and said rod being received in said channel.

45. (Currently Amended) The lifting device of claim 26, wherein said lead screw is disposed in a forwardly open lead screw channel in said column positioned between said channels in which said ~~rear~~ fork bearings are positioned, said flanges extend sideways from either side of said lead screw channel, and said slide has a rearwardly facing gear that ~~that~~ extends into said lead screw channel into operative engagement with said lead screw.